

Heroes & Villains

12 June – 21 July 2011

Aicha Hamu
Ali Abdel Mohsen
Asad Faulwell
Farsad Labeuf
Gazelle Samizay
Katyoun Vaziri
Marwan Sahmarani
Yasam Sasmazer

shabieriqayh



Lawrie Shabibi focuses on both established and emerging contemporary artists from the Arab world, Iran, North Africa, South Asia and Turkey.

Founded in 2009 by William Lawrie (former director of contemporary art at Christie's) and Asmaa Al-Shabibi (former managing director of Art Dubai). The gallery will continue to engage the public with art that imparts a cultural and political discourse intertwined with a powerful aesthetic.

The gallery also provides art advisory services for discerning collectors looking to acquire unique works of modern and contemporary Middle Eastern art.

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Heroes & Villains

Who are today's heroes? Who are the villains? The answer to this has never been less clear. Those who we adulate one minute might repulse us the next. Heroes commit villainous acts and yet even villains can redeem themselves. The very idea that they were ever villains at all depends on perspective and timing. In the fast-paced changes in today's world, the absolutes in politics and morality are exposed as illusory, expeditious and ambivalent. Heroes & Villains explores these grey areas in vivid colour, demonstrating the heady mix of glamour, drama, melodrama and grit that characterizes our notions of heroism and villainy.

The artists showing here have never been exhibited in a gallery in Dubai before. These include the Afghan video artist and photographer Gazelle Samizay, whose work explores the intersection of her Afghan heritage and American upbringing through her status as a woman; the Iranian-American artist Asad Faulwell, whose intricately woven collages celebrate the largely unsung female freedom fighters who struggled to end French occupation in Algeria; the French-Moroccan Aicha Hamu's stunning polyptych of Elizabeth Taylor and her seven husbands and glamorous scenes picked out in henna; Katayoun Vaziri, whose nationalist Iranian and American advertisements posters of the 1980s are manipulated by the general public; the extraordinary graphic scenes of urban decay by the young Egyptian Ali Abdel Mohsen; and the haunting images of children by the young Turkish sculptor Yasam Sasmazer.

Also included are works by Farsad Labbauf, almost calligraphic and whose work is found in the Saatchi Collection and Marwan Sahmarani, one of the 2010 Abraaj Capital Art Prize winners.



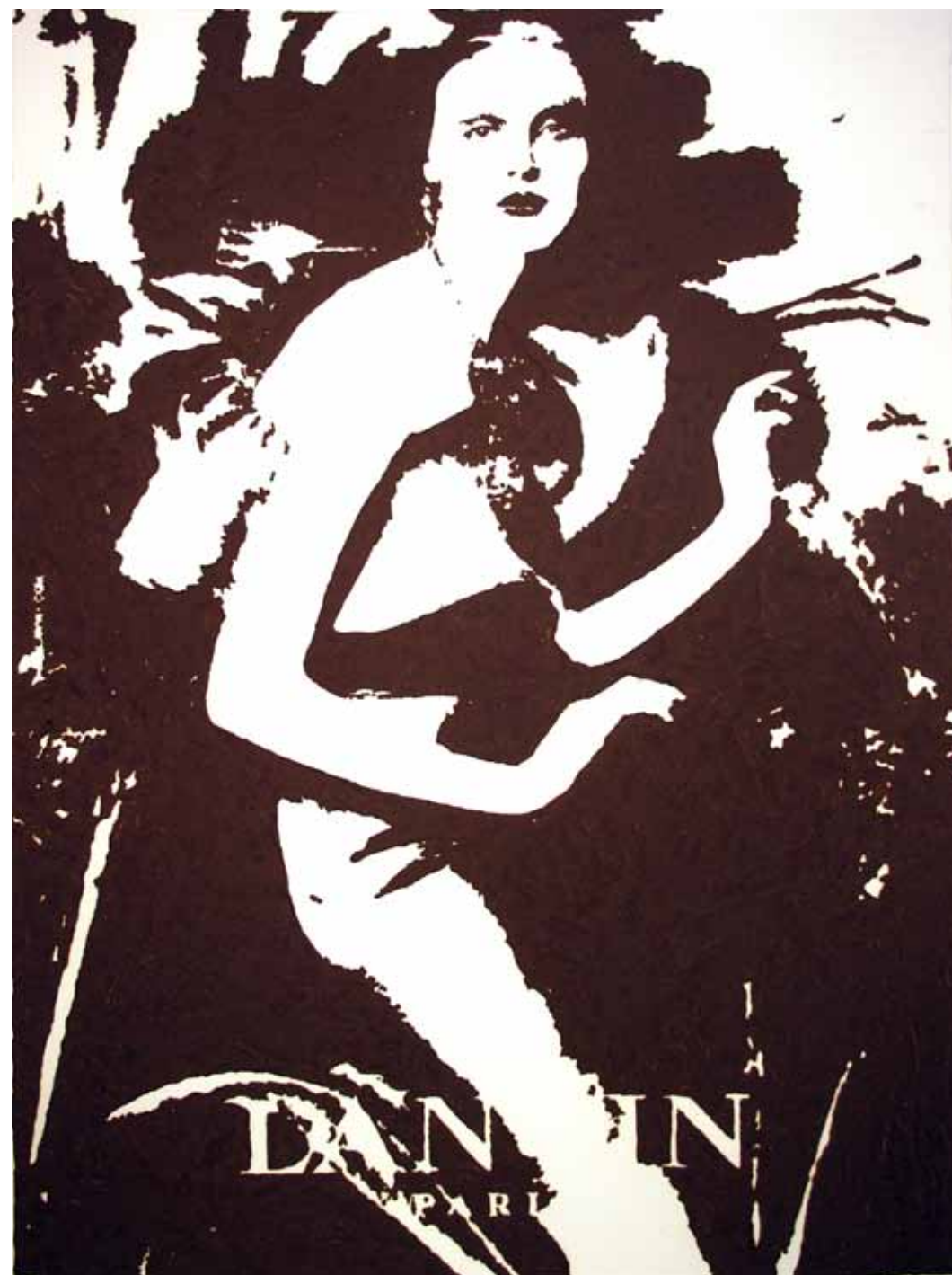
Untitled (Triptych)
1997
c-print
3 images, each 50 x 70cm



Queen Liz
2011
images scratched on satin
70 x 50 x 10cm



Untitled 1
2011
henna on paper framed
80 x 60cm



Untitled 2
2011
henna on paper framed
80 x 60cm



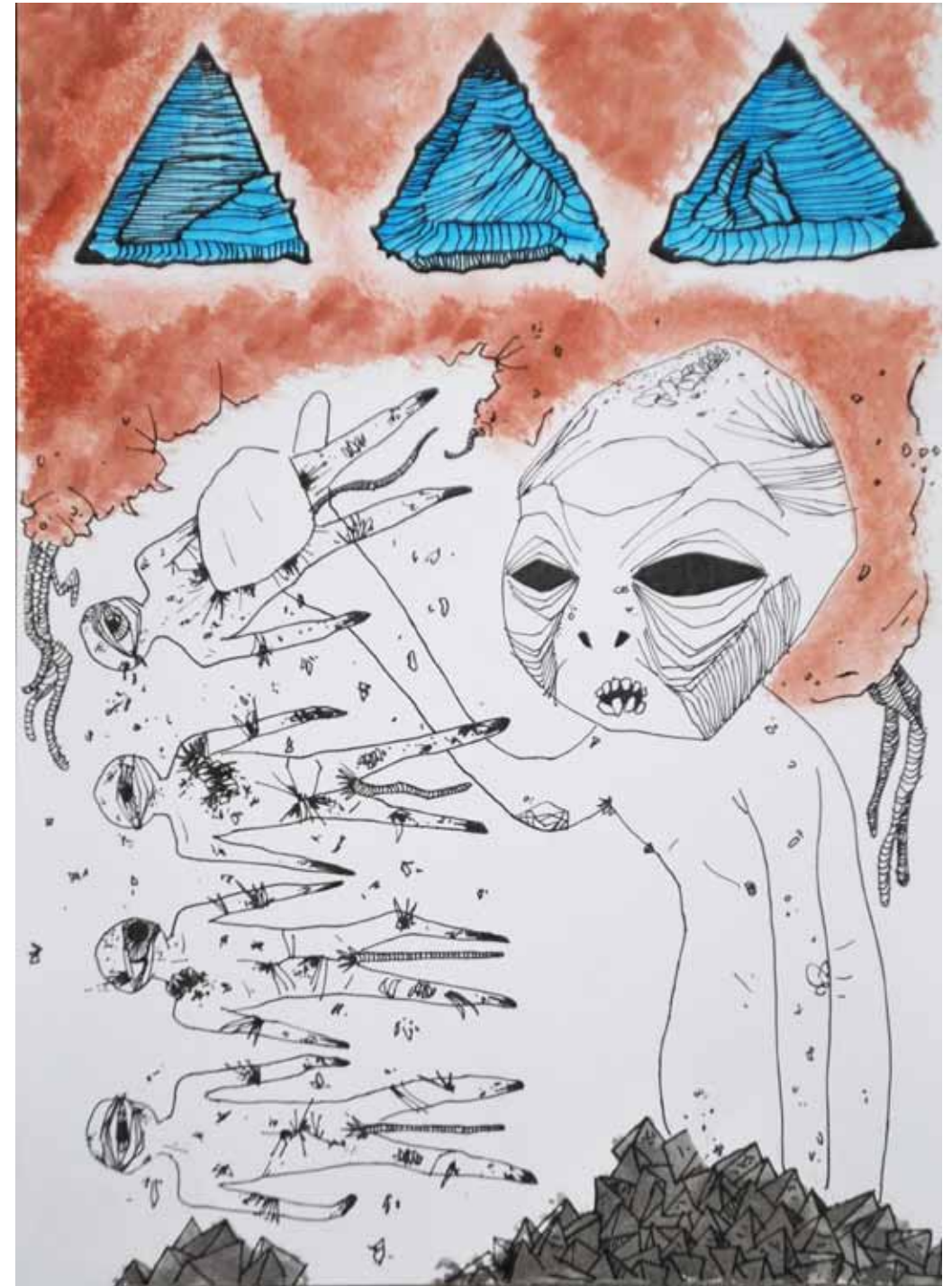
Untitled 1, A Voice From The Clouds Series
2011
ink and water colour on cornflakes boxes
34.5 x 53cm



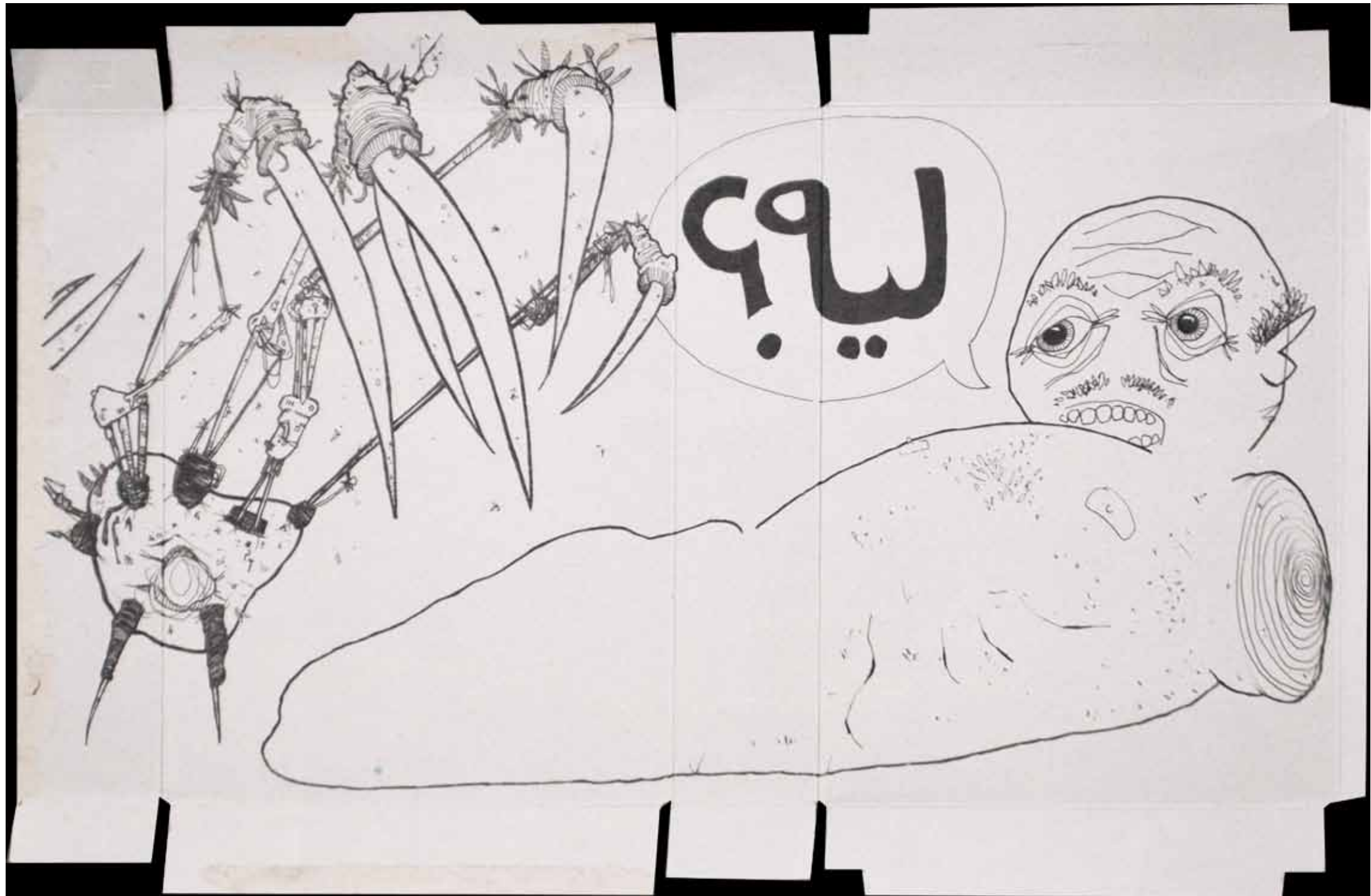
Untitled 2, A Voice From The Clouds Series
2011
ink and water colour on cornflakes boxes
32 x 50cm



Untitled 3, A Voice From The Clouds Series
2011
ink and water colour on paper
33.4 x 24.5cm



Untitled 4, A Voice From The Clouds Series
2011
ink and water colour on paper
33.5 x 24.5cm

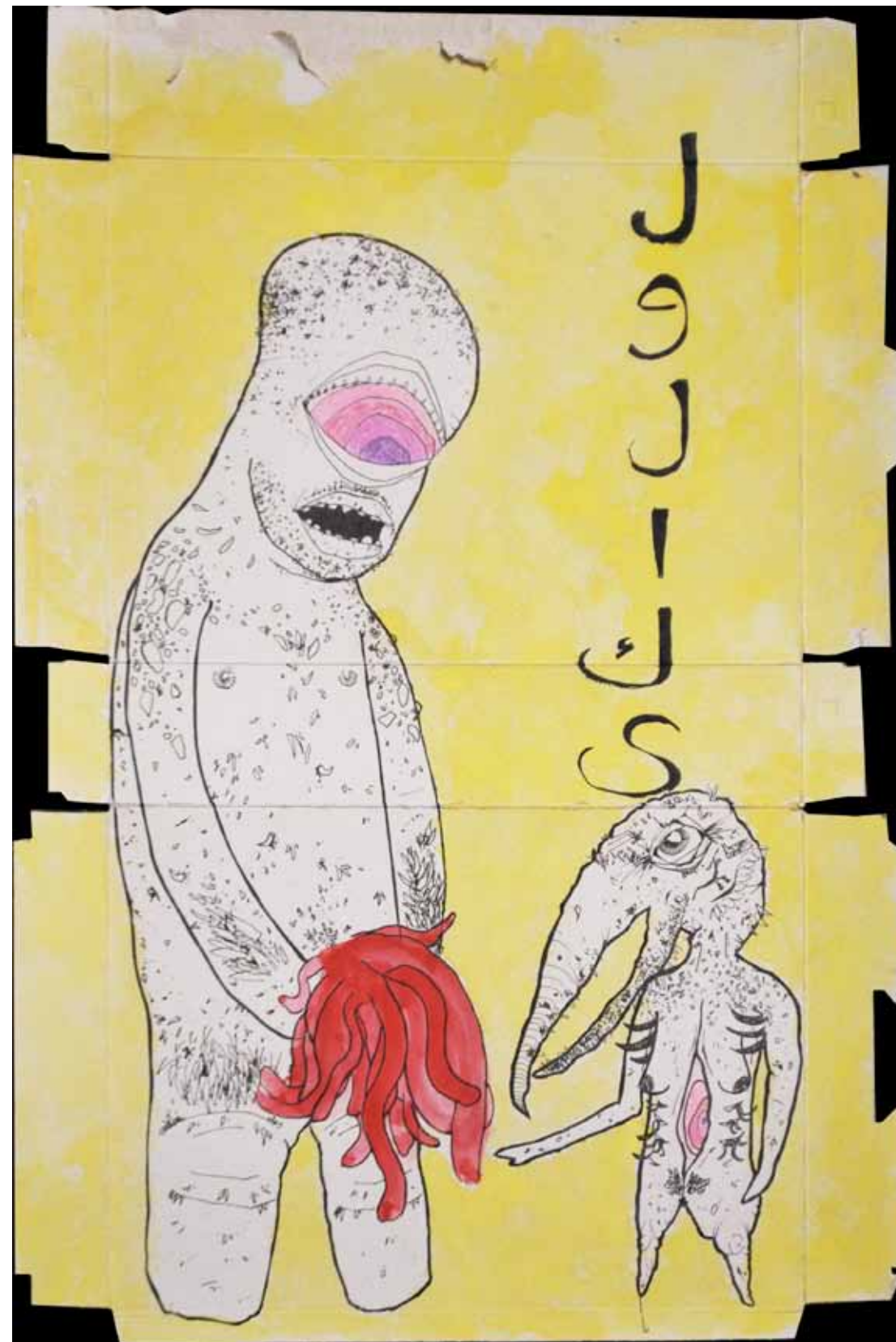


Untitled 5, A Voice From The Clouds Series
2011
ink and water colour on cornflakes boxes
33.5 x 50cm



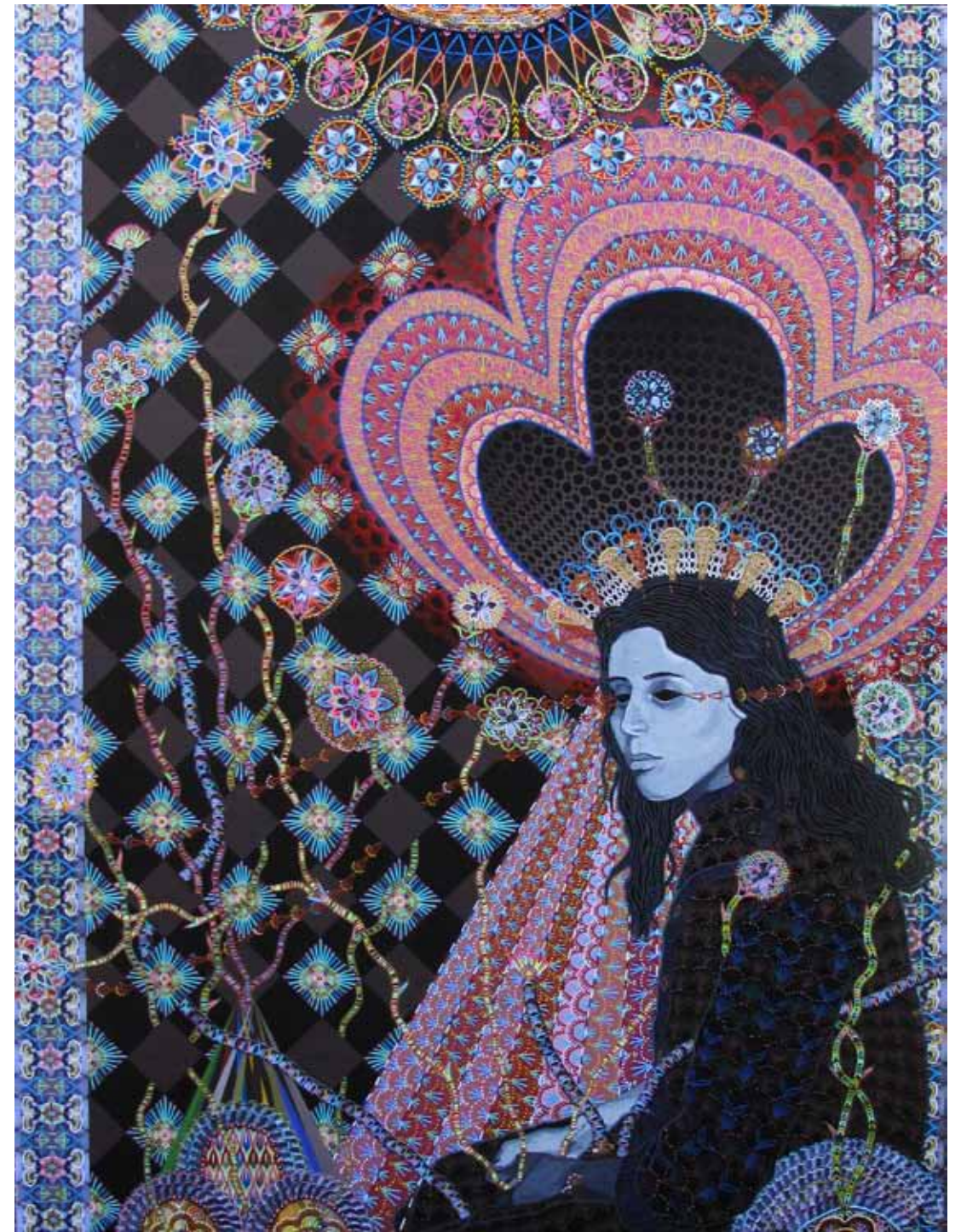
Untitled 6, A Voice From The Clouds Series
2011
ink and water colour on cornflakes boxes
32 x 50 cm

Untitled 7, A Voice From The Clouds Series
2011
ink and water colour on cornflakes boxes
32 x 50 cm





Les Femmes D'Alger #6
2011
acrylic and paper on canvas
122 x 92cm



Les Femmes D'Alger #7
2011
acrylic and paper on canvas
122 x 92cm



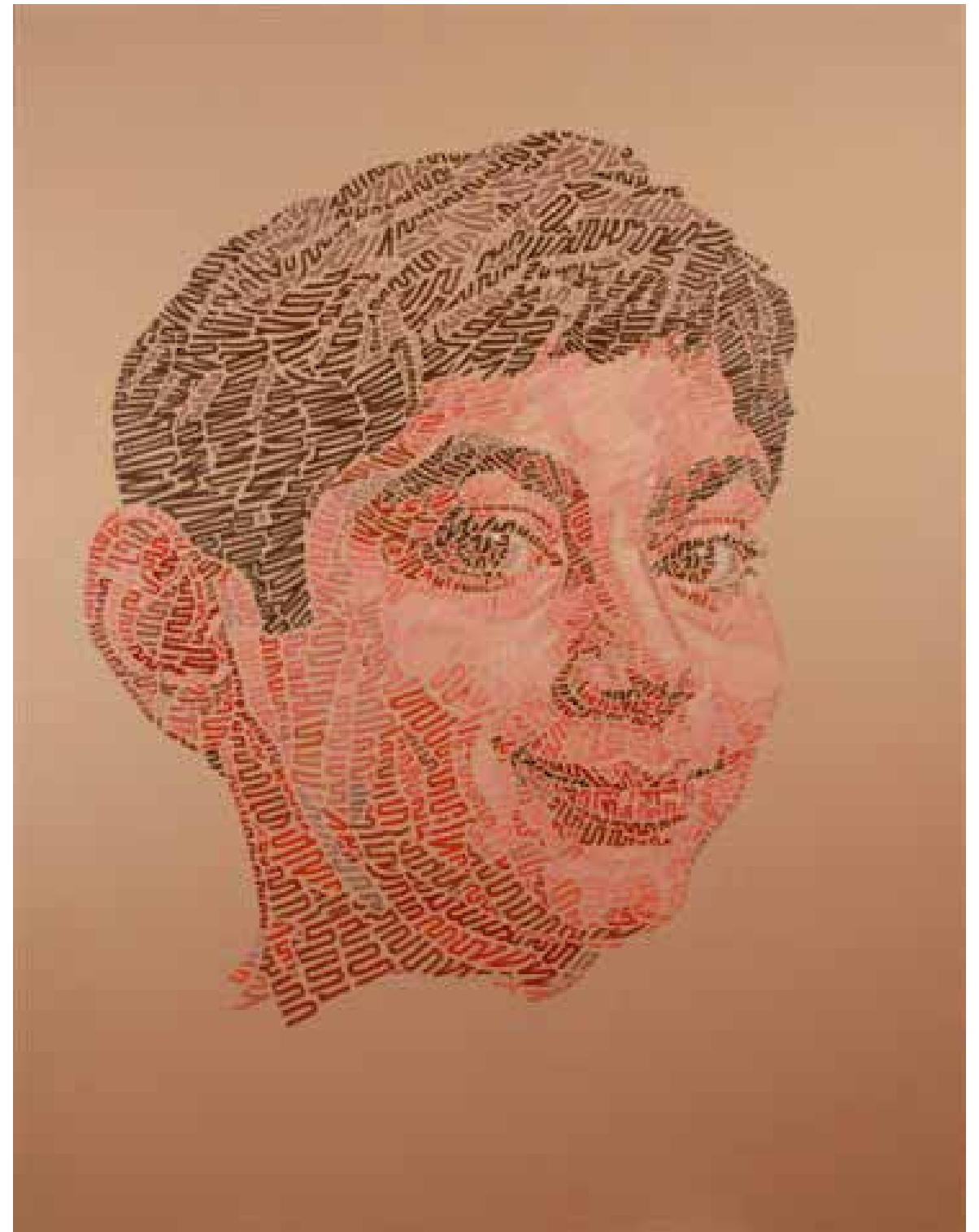
Zohra Drif #5
2011
acrylic and paper on canvas
101 x 76cm



In Between
2002-03
mixed media on canvas
168 x 168cm



Study Of The Eye
2008
oil and pencil on canvas
55 x 71 cm



Ameen
2008
oil and pencil on linen
229 x 178cm



Upon My Daughter 7, Ed. 2/6
2010
c-print
76.2 x 50.8cm



Upon My Daughter 3, Ed. 1/6
2010
c-print
76.2 x 50.8cm



Upon My Daughter 1, Ed. 1/6
2010
c-print
50.8 x 76.2cm



Upon My Daughter 7, Ed. 1/6
2010
c-print
50.8 x 76.2cm



Upon My Daughter 2, Ed. 1/6
2010
c-print
50.8 x 76.2cm



This Will Be The Last 5, Ed. 1/6
2009
c-print
50.8 x 76.2cm



An Ambiguous And Inconsequential Accident (Series One) Ed. 4/5

2011

digital print on moab entrada bright white duo paper

22 images, each 30 x 20cm



I Can Sit Right Here And Think A Thousand Miles Away...2
2009
ink and water colour on paper
76 x 144cm



I Can Sit Right Here And Think A Thousand Miles Away...3
2009
ink and water colour on paper
76 x 144cm



I Can Sit Right Here And Think A Thousand Miles Away...4
2010
ink and water colour on paper
76 x 144cm



You So Beautiful But You Gotta Die Some Day! 2
 2009
 ink and water colour on paper
 144 x 76cm



You So Beautiful But You Gotta Die Some Day! 3
 2010
 ink and water colour on paper
 144 x 76cm

Gruesome Bear, Ed. 1/7
2011
colour patinated bronze
45 x 15 x 11cm





Big Bang 1, Ed. 7/7
2011
colour patinated bronze
42 x 16 x 13cm



Big Bang 2, Ed. 3/7
2011
colour patinated bronze
42 x 24 x 10cm

Aïcha Hamu

Aïcha Hamu was born in Avignon, France to Moroccan parents in 1974 and graduated from DNSEP, Villa Arson, Nice in 1998. She has taken part in solo exhibitions in Tokyo, St Paul de Vence, Nice, Marseilles and Vienna and in numerous group exhibitions in London, Paris, Nice and Bologna. In June 2011 Hamu will present a solo installation work at the prestigious Musée National Pablo Picasso in Vallauris as part of the Cote d’Azur Contemporary Art Festival. Hamu lives and works in Nice, France.

Aïcha Hamu is fascinated by media images and the cult of celebrity. Pop art is certainly a factor in her work, but day-glo colours are not for her- rather a bleached, scratched and faded version of Pop. Hamu is a multi-disciplinary artist, working with materials that express the concepts central to each series. The scratched satin she uses in her celebrity portraits give an effect part way between that of the mirrored surface of a looking-glass and the painted surface of works on canvas. On the other hand, her henna paintings play with advertisements for modern age cosmetic products, so they resemble antique woodcuts or psychedelic posters of the 1960s.

Ali Abdel Mohsen

Ali Abdel Mohsen was born in Cairo in 1984. He is a full time reporter for the newspaper Al-Masry Al-Youm and is a self-taught artist. He has previously shown in two solo exhibitions, which include one in the groundbreaking art space Darb 17/18 in Old Cairo, and this is his third group show. Abdel Mohsen attended the Solyst Artist Residency in Denmark from August to October 2009.

The works in this exhibition are from Abdel Mohsen’s series A Voice From the Clouds. At once darkly pessimistic but hilariously comic, these drawings capture the sense of moral decrepitude and the crushing weight of the city of Cairo in a way that few other artists working today have achieved.

Asad Faulwell

Asad Faulwell was born in Caldwell, Idaho in 1982. He is currently based in Los Angeles and received his BA from UCSB in 2005 and his MFA from Claremont Graduate University in 2008. While at CGU he was the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant. Since graduating he has taken part in solo exhibitions in Los Angeles, Claremont and New York as well as group exhibitions in Zurich, Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Dubai and London. He is featured in numerous prominent private collections as well as the collection of the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art. His work has been written about in ArtForum, The New York Times and LA Weekly among others.

In this series of works Faulwell takes his inspiration from the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) during which over 10,000 fighting women took part. After the war, rather than empower these women, Algeria turned its back on many of them. After extensive research on the subject, Fauwell produced a series of intricate and

colourful works that both honours these women and also raises the question as to the morality of idolizing women who have killed, a question that transcends both borders and time.

Farsad Labbauf

Farsad Labbauf was born in 1965 in Tehran, Iran. After thirteen years, he moved to the United States just after the revolution. Labbauf received his BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1986 and his Bachelor of Industrial Design in 1987. He has held several solo exhibitions in Iran and in the United States, which include Manifestation of Unity, Aaran Gallery, Tehran, Iran, 12 Esfahanis, Niavaran Gallery, Tehran; in 2005 12 Esfahanis, in the Museum of Contemporary Art and in the Art Center Gallery, Esfahan, Iran; in 1993 Beyond Flesh, and in 1991 Vocabulary of Faith, both at the Kingston Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts.

Labbauf has participated in many group shows in the USA, Iran, Canada and in Europe. Recent group exhibitions include in 2011 My Super Hero at the Morono Kiang Gallery, Los Angeles, CA and at Aaran Gallery, Tehran; in 2010 IRAN DiVERSO: Black or White? EX AURUM Musuem, Pescara, Italy and at Artecontemporanea Gallery, Turin, Italy; In & Out Project B Gallery, Milan, Italy; in 2010 Back from the U.S., Amstel Gallery, Amsterdam; and in 2008 Unveiled, Saatchi Gallery, London; at the Lital Mehr Gallery and at Leslie Lohman Gallery New York, NY.

Farsad Labbauf’s style of painting shows a world in a state of flux, where all events, objects, scenes, people, thoughts and ideas are constantly changing. This is the only way of painting things truthfully for Labbauf, because any other more static means of depiction would carry the heavy and imposing predicament of time. His images exist halfway between completion and dissolution. This linear style creates a sense of unity within his paintings, so that no part is given greater importance than another and no hierarchies exist in terms of density, colour or content. Labbauf’s tendency to leave the works in a state that at first appears unfinished is related to this. Persian calligraphy is a source of inspiration, but so too are tribal tapestries and the weaves of carpets, and the intricate patterning of tile mosaics. Although his style is abstracted, the subject matter of Labbauf’s paintings is most often drawn quite clearly from the world around him.

Gazelle Samizay

Gazelle Samizay was born in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1981 and received her Master’s in Fine Arts in photography at the University of Arizona. Samizay’s photographs and videos have been exhibited across the US and internationally, including Brazil, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Pakistan, and the UK. In addition to her studio practice, she has taught courses in Afghanistan, Jordan and the US, and her writing has been published in One Story, Thirty Stories: An Anthology of Contemporary Afghan American Literature. Samizay is a recipient of the Princess Grace Experimental Film Honoraria, the 1885 Graduate Fellowship in Arts and Humanities, and the Northern

Trust Enrichment Award, among others.

Using video and photography Gazelle Samizay explores the intersection of her Afghan heritage and American upbringing through her status as a woman, questioning cultural definitions and constraints and revealing the burden of cultural and gendered expectations. In Upon My Daughter several women collectively embroider the wedding dress of a young bride as she wears it, each thread and stitch symbolizing one piece of advice the young bride is given. Individually, the threads are very delicate, but amassed together their strength becomes visible, symbolizing the powerful, yet complicated bonds between the women in this family.

Katyoun Vaziri

Katyoun Vaziri was born in 1983 in Tehran. She received a BFA in Industrial Design from Tehran University in 2005 and an MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Yale University in 2009. She has attended Skowhegan residency in 2010 and currently is participating in Constance Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts' 2011 residency. Vaziri currently lives and works in New York. She has participated in group shows and screenings such as Curate NYC or Time aftertime action and interactions. Her first solo show was held in the project space of Meulensteen gallery in 2010. In addition to her art practice, Vaziri also engages in curatorial projects such as Hand Held History video summit at Queens Museum and Futuro Perfecto at Zora Space in New York. She also reports on art scene of New York for BBC Farsi. In the coming year she is participating in ShapeShifters, a group show at Rossi and Rossi in London, curated by Jaishiri Abichandai, and also her first solo show in the main space of Meulensteen gallery in New York.

In this series of works Vaziri explores the interface between personal practice and public domain. She first made hand drawn movie posters, which combined iconic visual forms from Iran's nationalist posters of 1980s with American advertisements of the same era. Although Vaziri did not originate the forms, she subverted the power of these visual images through her medium. Although the posters resemble collages, all elements were hand drawn on thick paper. Vaziri's choice of muted colours and the exclusion of expected texted personalize the elements of the public domain. The second step was for her to ask individuals from among her Facebook friends from around the world to respond to the digital image of the drawings in a quick and spontaneous way, and in so doing the work reflects the constant give and take between citizens and their public context. Thus the artwork is formed by a series of alterations to an original, with the participants unaware of the appearance of that original. The names of contributors have been not mentioned so that the connotations of their names (and the prejudices that the viewer would therefore bring before their contributions) does not interfere with our observation of the work. The artist intends that from the sale of each panel 10% of her income will go to the participant by way of thanks.

Marwan Sahmarani

Marwan Sahmarani was born in Beirut in 1970 and graduated from the Atelier Met de Penninghen in Paris, France in 1989. Sahmarani has participated in a variety of solo exhibitions in London, Dubai, Canada and Beirut as well as group exhibitions in Munich, Washington DC and Mexico. His most recent group museum exhibitions are Told/ Untold / Retold at the Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, Qatar in 2010 and The Feast of the Damned at the Museum of Art & Design, New York, USA in 2010. Sahmarani was also one of three recipients of the prestigious Abraaj Capital Art Prize in 2010.

Marwan Sahmarani's painting is influenced by themes from art history that remain timeless and reflect contemporary issues. Islamic and Mesopotamian art with its iconography and history mixes in with a Greco Roman influence as well as the paintings of the great masters such as Uccello, Rubens, and Picasso. Using oils, ink, charcoal and watercolor as his mediums of expression, his work is often about the dark side of politics, sociology, war, and sexuality. In this series of works on paper Sahmarani is inspired by Albrecht Durer's 1513-14 engraving of Knight, Death and the Devil, depicting man's struggle to stay on the path of morality and virtue as a journey to the edge of death and insanity.

Yasam Sasmazer

Yasam Sasmazer was born in Istanbul in 1980 and she currently lives and works between Berlin and Istanbul. She studied sculpture at the workshop of Professor Rahmi Aksungur and graduated from the Sculpture Department in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Mimar Sinan University in 2003. That same year, she won the Sakıp Sabancı Art Awards and received second place in the Sculpture Department of Mimar Sinan University. She completed her master's degree at Mimar Sinan in 2006.

Working in solid wood and painted bronze, Sasmazer creates life-sized and miniature figures of children that explore issues and concepts which include the morality of good and bad, childhood as opposed to adulthood, and authority. Sasmazer has had several solo exhibitions and has participated in group exhibitions and art fairs in Turkey and Europe. Her work has recently appeared in the Turkish group show Dangerous Minds at the Saatchi Gallery in London, curated by Jason Lee and Carlo Beradi and was on the cover of the ground-breaking book on Turkish art, Unleashed.

With thanks to Kravets Wehby, New York, Meulensteen, New York, Berlin Art Projects, Berlin and Traffic, Dubai for making this show possible.

The publication of this catalogue coincides with an exhibition of the same title at Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai 12 June - 21 July, 2011.
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